



NEWS

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas **L.A. County Board of Supervisors, 2nd District**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RIDLEY-THOMAS URGES SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION URGING CONGRESS TO EMPHASIZE LOW-INCOME CHILDREN IN PRESIDENT OBAMA'S UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE PLAN

LOS ANGELES – Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas today asked the Board to support and execute a resolution urging Congress and the Obama Administration to include low-income children and pregnant women in its historic efforts to achieve universal health coverage this year.

One in nine children in America is uninsured and one in eight children (1.27 million ages 8-18) in California are uninsured. Approximately 329,000 uninsured children currently reside in Los Angeles County, many of whom are particularly vulnerable in this time of budget constraint and economic crisis.

The Board met with California Congressional leaders and the Obama Administration in Washington D.C. in May, to express strong support for universal health reform that would cover medically-necessary comprehensive services, including prescription drugs, primary and preventive care, mental health and substance abuse, vision and dental benefits.

"Urging affordable and comprehensive coverage for children would be consistent with the County's call for universal health coverage," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said, adding that the services would be provided without regard to prior medical condition.

The Supervisor asked the Board to authorize the Chair of the Board to send a copy of his resolution on children's national health reform to the Los Angeles County Congressional delegation and key Congressional Committee Members.

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County of Los Angeles

CHILDREN'S NATIONAL HEALTH REFORM

WHEREAS, one in nine children in America are uninsured. One in eight children (1.27 million children) in California are uninsured. At least 227,000 uninsured children currently reside in Los Angeles County.

WHEREAS, children are particularly vulnerable in this time of economic crisis and federal and state budget curtailments. For example, roughly 240,000 Los Angeles County children would lose comprehensive health coverage if Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed elimination of the Healthy Families program is implemented.

WHEREAS, the Children's Defense Fund and other national and state children's organizations have urged Congress to guarantee every child and pregnant woman comprehensive health and mental health coverage.

WHEREAS the health coverage for all children should provide:

- A national eligibility level to cover all children and ensures coverage is affordable;
- A national benefit package that covers medically necessary health, mental health and dental services;
- Streamlined mechanisms to ensure children get and stay covered; and
- Adequate provider reimbursement rates to ensure children actually receive needed services;

WHEREAS uninsured children are less likely to get needed medical care.

WHEREAS extending coverage to children is cost effective because children with coverage are more likely to receive immunizations and receive services at the primary care level, avoiding costly and unnecessary emergency room care.

WHEREAS, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors met with Congressional leaders and the Obama Administration in Washington D.C. in May of 2009 to express strong support for universal health reform that would cover medically necessary comprehensive services (including prescription drugs, primary and preventive care, mental health and substance abuse, vision and dental benefits) without regard to prior medical condition. Urging affordable and comprehensive coverage for children would be consistent with the County's call for universal health coverage.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles urge Congress and the Obama Administration to work to include children and pregnant women in its historic efforts to achieve universal health coverage this year.

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